

PERSpectives

Second Quarter 2002

Public Employee Retirement System of Idaho

We protect your Social Security Number, but we do need to use it

Identity theft is serious, and we are just as concerned about it as you are. People are increasingly protective of personal information such as Social Security Numbers (SSN), and rightly so. At PERSI, we have taken steps to help ensure the safety of your SSN and other data.

For more than a decade, PERSI has utilized a records disposal service that shreds all documents containing any personal data.

If you retired after February 2001 and have a PERSI Choice Plan account, you may have noticed that on your Choice Plan quarterly statements we no longer print your SSN on the statement, and we

instead have assigned you a random Employee Number. This is a six-digit number found to the right of your name and address on page one.

However, even with these precautions, PERSI does still need to use your SSN for IRS and administrative purposes. Therefore, we will still require that you provide it on forms, or over the phone if you are calling in for information. We will also continue to require SSNs for spouses and/or beneficiaries to ensure any Death Benefits are paid to those you intend to receive them.

Without your SSN, PERSI would not be able to report your pension information to the Internal Revenue Service, and this could result in adverse tax consequences for you.

PERSI will not disclose your SSN to any individual or organization unless you provide authorization, or as required by law. We will use your SSN only to collect and administer information about your PERSI account and to make reports to the IRS on distributions or withholdings.

Disclosure of your Social Security Number (SSN) is mandated by Internal Revenue Code. 26 United States Code 6047(D), 6041(A) and 6109(A)(3) authorize PERSI to ask for and utilize your SSN. ◆



If you call PERSI, please be ready to provide your Social Security number.

A Message from Retirement Board Chairman, Jody B. Olson

Economic doldrums lull PERSI's growth

As you have no doubt noticed, the economy is not recovering as hoped. PERSI's returns for the year look to be, at best -2% (after -6.1% last year). Poor returns mean that there will be no Gain Sharing again this year, and that annual Cost of Living Allowances for retirees for amounts above the mandatory 1% may also be affected starting March 2003. Your PERSI Board of Trustees, over the next year or so, will examine PERSI's assets and liabilities, economic assumptions and member demographics to determine our funding status.

No matter what, your retirement benefits are still 100 % guaranteed. You will continue receiving your monthly payments as promised. Your \$6.6 Billion PERSI fund is strong and will remain so.

Over the next several months, I invite you to monitor our monthly Board meetings in person, via our website or through your representatives. At most meetings, attendees include representatives from the Governor's office, employers and employee groups. Among my favorites are retiree representatives Jim Coleman, Charlie Brown and Tom Robb, all of whom were teachers in the 1950s in Boise when I was in school. They still want to teach, and I have a lot to learn. ◆

Historical Society retiree goes to

by Maxine Thomas
PERSI Training Specialist

Countless thousands of people, Idahoans and tourists alike, have traipsed through the Idaho Historical Museum over the years vicariously experiencing Idaho as it once was, due in large part, to the work of this month's feature retiree, Fred Schmidt.

Fred designed and built exhibits at the museum for some 18 years before retiring this past February. His work included new exhibit construction and the maintenance of existing exhibits.

Fred is proud of his work at the museum and says "The exhibits I constructed are solid, strong and will stand the test of time. Many visitors will view these creations in years to come."

But just because he no longer gets paid to make history come alive, doesn't mean that Fred has stopped doing so. Fred is an avid student of past cultures and lifestyles, and is keenly interested in keeping the techniques and handicrafts of the past alive today. He is particularly interested in the tools and creations of native Americans.

I was overwhelmed and amazed by what I saw when I stepped into Fred's world. The first thing I saw was an enormous drum that Fred made with some Seneca Indian tribal members. Then, displayed on his wall, I saw a goose feather dance bustle. He

pieces. These are truly magnificent, museum quality artifacts that reflect Fred's real expertise. Pictures do not do justice to the intricate beadwork and other details that went into creating these pieces of art. Fred is one of those rare

individuals who has studied and can recreate a lifestyle that was essentially left in the prehistoric era of North America.

He showed me tools that he and others have made out of obsidian rock, including razors sharp enough to shave with and arrowheads sturdy enough to bring down a moose. I received a demonstration of how ancient man built an arrow, including the nock, the pine tar pitch and sinew. Fred demonstrated how he makes these objects and the physics of creating them. (Yes, physics!) It requires an experienced hand to make a quality obsidian arrowhead without ruining or breaking the stone. If the rocks are struck just perfectly they break off in predictable sections every time. I saw mahogany

obsidian stones (truly beautiful), grinding stones and antler tools of all shapes, sizes and uses that Fred patiently explained to me.

I was impressed when I realized that Fred is the creator of the Indian artifacts exhibit at the Idaho



Fred Schmidt atop
Washington's Mount Rainier

actually uses these pieces in dances he participates in at Indian gatherings all over.

These are not your run-of-the-mill

great heights to keep history alive

Historical Museum. I have always loved that exhibit and was truly honored that Fred would share his expertise with me. I even walked away with two arrowheads (he GAVE them to me, I didn't STEAL them!).

I asked Fred if he had any interesting stories from his days at the museum and he related the following: "A couple interesting incidents come to mind. I was asked to build three pine coffins to hold the remains of three individuals uncovered during a construction project in Boise. After the coffins were completed and the remains placed within, a funeral was held. A horse drawn wagon delivered the coffins and all were re-interred in the old Fort Boise cemetery.



Seneca
Indian
drum
created
by Fred
Schmidt

found elsewhere in the Capitol. The desk was built in two sections in the basement woodshop of the Historical Museum. It had to be built that way or it could not have been moved out of

for 30 years I chose to do something entirely different," he says. He now works for Interior Systems Inc. at the Micron main plant servicing the more than 12,000 doors on site. "That literally keep's me hoppin'. I've lost three pounds walking all over the site! Their cafeteria alone is 12000 square feet!" he adds.

Fred and his wife, Yvonne, celebrated their 38th anniversary in January, and says "We are fortunate to have two married children and 3 grandchildren."

Fred is a remarkable man who is one of those fortunate beings that can accomplish much. He is generous with his time and wisdom. I cannot possibly explain the amount of information I got in one hour with Fred. He is an educator who is trying to keep this rare ability and knowledge current in our civilization. He is really a cultural treasure!

Another interesting project was the construction of a desk now being used in the Capitol building's rotunda. The desk is almost 13 feet in length with angled "wings" on each end. The transaction surface and base moldings are covered with Italian

marble. I had wood molding replicated to match molding

the basement. I wonder about it's future, considering the Capitol restoration project is currently "on hold". This was, after all not a cheap item!"

Though "retired," Fred says, "My life is as busy as ever!" And he hasn't stopped working either. "After 'stickin' wood together'



Goose feather dance
bustle

We nearly lost him several years back, however. Fred suffered a major heart attack in 1995 that changed his life. He now belongs to The Highpointer's Club, climbing the "highpoint" mountain in every

Retiree *continued from page 3*

state. He says, "I already have 28 highpoints and that includes all the states west of the Mississippi and a few in the east."



Fred Schmidt top Texas' highpoint of Guadalupe Peak (8,749 ft). The stainless steel pyramid has been at the peak for 44 years.

See the pictures of him triumphing on Mt. Rainier and atop Guadalupe Peak, the highest mountain in Texas (yes, apparently they have mountains there). The Texas peak has an unusual marker at its apex.

Fred says many mountains have symbolic markers at their summit. (I'll have to take his word for it since I'll never see them in person!)

He has even summited California's Mt. Whitney – the tallest mountain in

the lower 48 states – at 14,496 feet. "I plan to spend six months on a hike of the Appalachian Trail (2159 miles through 14 states) in two years," he adds. ♦

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**PERSpectives**

Public Employee Retirement System of Idaho

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